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SOURCE Ch'ang-chiang Jih-pao.

SOUTH CHINA MARINE PRODUCTS CONFERENCE  
CALLS FOR INCREASED FISH PRODUCTION

A second conference on marine products was held by the Agricultural Department of the Central-South China Military and Administrative Committee, in November 1951, with more than 20 delegates attending. The conference called for an increase in fish production, aiming to reach prewar levels.

The South-Central China coastal fishing area consists of 440,000 nautical square miles, and the fresh-water area of more than 40 million mou (one mou equals 1/6 acre). The value of marine products is equivalent to 80 percent of the value of the regions grain products. Some 1,700,000 men are employed in the fishing industry. Including their families, 7 million people are involved.

On 20 November 1951, the Agricultural Department of the Central-South China Military and Administrative Committee held a second conference on marine products. More than 20 delegates attended from government offices from all the provinces of the region and from Wuhan municipality. The conference summed up the work of the year and decided for 1952 to start a popular movement for the increase of production in the fishing enterprise.

The coastal area in the Central-South China Region amounts to 440,000 nautical square miles. The fresh-water area, within the land, consisting of lakes and ponds, has more than 40 million mou. With full production they could secure 5 million tons of fish each year. In addition, there are such marine products as shells and lotus seeds. It is estimated that the value of annual marine products are equivalent to more than 80 percent of the annual grain products, so their importance in the national economy is very evident.

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Under the leadership of all grades of the government, fishing industry production was restored to a considerable extent since liberation. In 1950, the industry attained 57 percent of the prewar level. It is estimated that in 1951 it will reach 80 percent. The year 1951 has seen the establishment of 2,000 cadre worker groups and the organization among the fishermen of 8,230 societies, with 270,000 men participating. Also there are 150 fishing cooperatives with 62,000 members.

On their own initiative, the coastal fishermen in Kwangtung Province have formed water militia to help the government maintain order and to aid national defence.

In the Wuhan municipality and in Kwangtung Province fish markets have been established. The middlemen's commission has been lowered from the 20-40 percent of the feudalistic companies to only 2 percent. On the other hand, the price of fish has increased 40 percent.

To assist production, the government has issued loans. In San Wei, Kwangtung Province, fishery insurance is managed. Everywhere fish-processing factories solve the problems of processing and transportation. All of these aids have increased productive capacity.

In 1950, 22,000 piculs of fish were caught in the Ta T'ung Hu in Hunan Province; but in 1951 the amount has been increased to more than 30,000 piculs. Investigation in one hsien in Kiangsi Province showed that in the past the fishermen secured an income sufficient for food for only 4 months, but this year (1951) they can supply food for the entire year.

Unfortunately, during the land distribution some fishermen delayed work until sure of their share of the land. The development of new measures has been delayed by the prevalence of unusually severe storms along the coast.

With a realization of all these factors in the situation the conference decided to launch a movement for increased production, aiming to reach the level of prewar times, at the same time eradicating feudalistic ideas, aiding the people's revolution, making more general the organization of fishermen, improving their political and economic status, unifying the control of lakes and ponds, correcting illegal taxation, helping the fishermen with safety equipment, increasing their insurance facilities, improving loan aids and methods of salting fish, and developing their patriotic movement for increase of production.

[The same issue of the newspaper contained a short editorial covering some of the same main points, plus the following additional data: "Incomplete statistics would indicate that 1,700,000 men are employed in fishing. Including their families, 7 million people are involved. They are energetic and brave people, who suffered much during the war. We must strengthen in them the principle that 'all fishermen under heaven are one family.'"]

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